(d) whether it is a fact that there is large scale discontentment in AMC officers because of such indiscriminate and illegal use of power by AHQ; and

(e) what steps are being taken by MOD to rectify the situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) No Sir.

(b) Army Headquarters are exercising these powers apparently under paras 16A(d) and 27 of Regulations for Medical Services of the Armed Forces (RMSAF-83) as interpreted by them.

(c) :

	1998	1999
Col. and equivalent	08	283
Brig. and Equivalent	11	47

(d) No such instance has come to the notice of the Goverment.

(e) The matter is under examination.

Talks with Terrorists

†3982. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL :

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have offered to hold talks with the terrorist groups to bring them into the mainstream of society;

(b) if so, the details of the groups selected for talks;

(c) whether Government have received the reaction of these groups; and

(d) if so, the details of reaction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASGAR RAO) : (a) to (d) : During his visit to Jammu and Kashmir on 26-27 July, 1997, the then Prime Minister had made an appeal to the misguided youth of the State, who have joined the militant ranks, to give up

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

their guns, and said that the Government was prepared to have unconditional talks with them, to enable them to rejoin the mainstream. The Government is committed to the said offer of talks, within the constitutional frame work.

The Prime Minister of India had spelt out the parameters for initiating a peace dialogue with militant outfits in the North East on 15 April, 1998 at Guwahati declaring :

"To all those who have strayed from the paths of togetherness, whether in Assam or other States of the North East, I extend an invitation, come forward; let us discuss, my Government is committed to holding talks, to a restoration of peace; let us do so within the four corners of our Constitution."

Cease fire and peace talks with the NSCN(IM) are underway since 1 August, 1997. Suspension of operations with the Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) was also announced earlier this year. NSCN(K) have also issued a Press Release Offering a formal 'cease fire' with the Government of India and political talks.

The offer for talks have been made by the Government in view of its commitment to resolve all issues through negotiations. The Government are firmly of the view that violence has no place in a democratic polity and the people by and large want peace and an end to violence.

Houses Vacated by Kashmiri Pandits

3983. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the houses vacated by Kashmiri Pandit migrants have either been torched by the militants or are occupied by unauthorised people;

(b) if so, how many houses are in possession of unauthorised people;

(c) what steps have been taken to dispossess of unauthorised people from such houses;

(d) what is the number of houses vacated from unauthorised people so far; and

(e) what steps have been taken to protect such houses?